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ASA Guidelines

Disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers

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Australian Sonographers Association Ltd
PO Box 709 Moorabbin VIC 3189
P: 03 9585 2996 F: 03 9585 2331
E: executive@a-s-a.com.au W: www.a-s-a.com.au



ASA Guidelines- Disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers

The Australian Sonographers Association advises all members that disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers should meet the appropriate recognised standards. This includes transducers used for:

- transvaginal,
- transoesophageal and
- transrectal
- sonographic examinations.

There are two relevant national standards:

1. AS/NZS 4187-2003 Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities. (1)
2. Infection control guidelines for the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the health care setting, Department of Health 2004. (2)

The Australian/New Zealand standard 4187-2003 states that “Only disinfectants labelled as “Instrument grade disinfectants” in accordance with the requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration are suitable for use as disinfectants for reusable instruments. A high-level instrument grade disinfectant shall be the minimum level used to effect disinfection of semi-critical instruments which contact unbroken mucous membranes that are not normally sterile”. (1) Intracavity ultrasound transducers are categorised as class IIb, semi-critical reusable instruments requiring high-level instrument grade disinfection. (2, 3) Transducers that come into contact with intact skin require only intermediate-level or low-level instrument grade disinfectant.

Therefore, only chemicals registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) as high-level instrument grade disinfectants for class IIb medical devices are to be used for intracavity ultrasound transducers and these include:

- Gluteraldehyde.
- Ortho-phthalaldehyde i.e. Cidex OPA (most commonly used due to larger molecular structure, providing less vapour).
- Hydrogen Peroxide, used with the Trophon EPR system (TGA approval 19/2/09). (4)

PLEASE NOTE that Sodium Hypochlorite (Milton) is NOT recognised by the TGA as a high level instrument grade disinfectant.

In using such compounds, please ensure the following:

- Prior to the use of disinfectants, reference shall be made to the relevant occupational health and safety regulations and Material Safety Data Sheets.
- Care shall be taken to follow each disinfectant manufacturer’s labelled conditions for the use of their specific products.
- Manufacturer’s safety recommendations should be followed. (1)
- Each department should ensure appropriate OH & S protocols are developed and all staff are made aware of these protocols.
- The compounds may be of a hazardous nature and the user should take care at all times when mixing, using or disposing of the disinfectant.

References

1. AS/NZS 4187-2003 Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilizing reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities.
2. Infection control guidelines for the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the health care setting, Department of Health, Australia 2004, Chpt.17.pp Available at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/icg-guidelines-index.htm>
3. How are disinfectants regulated? Therapeutic Goods Administration. Available at: <http://www.tga.gov.au/devices/devices.htm>.
4. TGA eBS Public summary document, Summary for ARTG Entry, 159484.